



Earth Sciences Scholarships

IMPACT REPORT 2025



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THANK YOU

On behalf of the Research School of Earth Sciences (RSES) at The Australian National University (ANU), I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous donor community. Your support continues to make a profound difference in the lives of our students and in the advancement of Earth and marine sciences.

Studying Earth and marine sciences is vital not only for understanding our planet's past and present but also for addressing the critical environmental challenges we face today. In a time when climate change, resource sustainability, and environmental resilience are of pressing global concern, the importance of research and education in the Earth sciences has never been greater. With your ongoing generosity, we can provide our students with the resources and opportunities they need to excel in their studies and conduct groundbreaking research.

Thanks to your support, RSES students are empowered to pursue their academic passions and contribute to the global conversation on sustainability and scientific discovery. This report highlights the incredible achievements of our students, who have thrived with the help of your gift. Thanks to your commitment, RSES students are not only thriving academically but are also empowered to contribute meaningfully to the international conversation on sustainability, environmental stewardship, and the responsible use of Earth's resources.

We are proud to recognise the outstanding recipients of 2024 and 2025 scholarships and prizes, including the A L Hales Honours Year Scholarship, Scholarship in Regolith Science, the Ian McDougall Honours Scholarship, and the W B Clarke Prize in Earth Sciences and A E Ringwood Supplementary Scholarship.

Once again, thank you for your unwavering belief in the importance of Earth sciences and for enabling us to provide exceptional students with the opportunity to thrive. Your generosity is not only enabling us to nurture the next generation of scientists but is also contributing to knowledge that will shape the sustainable future of our planet.

Warm regards

Professor Dorrit Jacob FAA

Director, Research School of Earth Sciences
The Australian National University



Introduction

RSES continues to foster academic excellence through a range of scholarships and awards that support the pursuit of research in Earth and marine sciences. These include (but are not limited to):

A L Hales Honours Year Scholarship: Awarded in 2024 to Moss Thompson and in 2025 to Alex Vickery.

Scholarship in Regolith Science: Awarded in 2024 to Sebastian Bland and in 2025 to Max Lecoultre.

Ian McDougall Honours Scholarship: Awarded in 2024 to Samuel Hill and in 2025 to Dine Yoo.

W B Clarke Prize in Earth Sciences: Awarded in 2024 to Chung Hei (Jonas) Lai and in 2025 to Jarell Cubarrubia.

A E Ringwood Supplementary Scholarship: Awarded in 2025 to Salome Urien.

In 2024, the **Earth Sciences Masters Scholarships** were not awarded, as there were no eligible domestic Masters students.

Earth Sciences Opportunity Scholarships are progressing well, with the scholarship subcommittee currently considering potential recipients for 2025.



Message of thanks from Moss Thompson

2024 recipient of A L Hales Honours Year Scholarship

I am sincerely grateful to have received the A L Hales Honours Scholarship from the Research School of Earth Sciences.

This generous support enabled me to complete my Honours thesis, which investigated whether trace element concentrations in Porites coral cores from the Persian Gulf preserve evidence of oil spills.

Using Laser Ablation Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) to analyse coral cores from sites proximal to the world's largest oil spill, I was able to uncover preserved evidence of anthropogenic disturbance of the marine environment, ultimately completing my project with First Class Honours.

This scholarship played a key role in helping me reach that goal, and I deeply appreciate the opportunity it provided. I send my warmest thanks and well wishes to the donor, whose support continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of students.

Kind regards
Moss Thompson



Message of thanks from Alex Vickery

2024 recipient of A L Hales Honours Year Scholarship

My name is Alexandra Vickery, and I'm writing this letter as a thank you for my receipt of the A L Hales Honours Year Scholarship (in geophysics and geochemistry). I was on the bus when I first heard that I received the scholarship - it was very exciting, and quite a relief to know that I'd be able to focus on my research work this year, without as much worry about living expenses. I'm deeply grateful to have been given this opportunity! I had to quietly contain myself until we arrived at my stop, and I could call my parents, sister, and partner to share the good news!

I was born and raised in Canberra and completed my education through its public school system. It, like most in this country unfortunately, did an often poor job of teaching earth sciences - with very few teachers trained in the field, and the curriculum struggling to build upon previous years to make any new earth science content feel exciting and interconnected. Likewise, while my parents have always been supportive of my love for geophysics, they both studied humanities and had little attachment to science in general. Part of the joy of earth sciences I think, is that it surrounds us - and even without strong institutional support, it can spark an interest in any of us curious about how the weather works, or where mountains come from, or any other such feature of the planet.

Doing the Bachelor of Philosophy degree, I've gotten a lot of freedom to pick my own academic path, to focus on what interests me the most. This meant I got to engage with my love of geophysics, completing research work with the geodynamics, climate/fluid physics, seismology, and geodesy groups! The thing that unites them, to me, is seeing these laws of physics we learn in class operating in the natural world around us. I think there is nothing more beautiful. It's incredibly humbling to me that we get this insight into the Earth, and I am so glad I've been getting the chance to study it.

My honours project - that this scholarship is funding - for instance, is into glacial earthquake events in Antarctica. I am working on interpreting the motion of millions of tonnes of ice (and their implications for future Antarctic dynamics stability), using the rules of classical mechanics and electromagnetism as interpreted through seismology and geodesy (with a healthy serving of statistics).

By receiving this scholarship, I'm able to focus on this research through my honours year, getting the most out of this period of close supervisor-collaboration as I can. Additionally, it is assisting me in attending a geodetic conference later this year and publishing some research I completed with CSIRO over the summer! While I'm not certain what I'll be doing in my future, I'd love to continue in research to gain a postgraduate education at least, and building the skills and connections from these activities will be immensely beneficial in achieving these aims.

Thank you again for your contributions towards this A L Hales scholarship, I'm honoured to receive it. I hope this year treats you kindly, that you keep good health, and that any earthquakes you experience are magnitude five or below!

All the best
Alex Vickery



By receiving this scholarship, I'm able to focus on this research through my honours year, getting the most out of this period of close supervisor-collaboration as I can.

- ALEX VICKERY

Message of thanks from Max Lecoultre

2025 recipient of the Scholarship in Regolith Science

My name is Maximilian Lecoultre, and I received the Scholarship in Regolith Sciences for my Honours project on the formation and structure of opal. Firstly, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the donor of this scholarship. This scholarship has allowed me to undertake my Honours year with my undivided attention and put my best efforts into completing new research on the structure and formation of opal. I cannot thank you enough.

When I found out that I had received the scholarship, I was ecstatic! The first people I contacted were both of my parents to share the news, followed by my honours supervisor, Penelope King, who encouraged me to go for the scholarship and who has been working very closely with me throughout my research.

I am originally from Sydney and moved to ANU to study Earth Science among some of the world's leading geologists and geophysicists. I have always had a fascination with the Earth and it's phenomena, and after studying Earth Science in high school I knew that I could use my skills and efforts to contribute to this field. Since being at ANU, I have developed a strong passion for minerals and chemistry, which drove me to research the geological enigma of opals and their formation. I am continuing my passion for minerals by embarking on an Erasmus Mundus masters program in Europe starting in September, learning about geo-resource engineering.

This award has allowed me to pour my full efforts into my project and ensure I complete it to the best of my ability, as well as providing funds to support sample collection and other expenses involved in my research. It has also allowed me to make the most of this year as a fundamental experience for my career. By putting my best efforts into my Honours project, I have learnt so much about my chosen topic but also working in research in general.

Thank you again to the donor of the award. You have made a significant difference in the completion of my project, and as a result, in my career. I am truly appreciative.

Kind regards
Max Lecoultre



Without this award, I would not have been able to put as much time into my project as I have, and for that I am extremely grateful. I have been able to learn so much from so many amazing researchers and professors.

- MAX LECOULTRE

Message of thanks from Dine Yoo

2025 recipient of the Ian McDougall Scholarship

My name is Dine, and I am truly honoured to have received the 2025 Ian McDougall Scholarship. I want to sincerely thank you for this incredible opportunity and your generous support. I will never forget the moment I received the email with the subject line 'Congratulations.' It was a typical morning, and as I opened the message, I was thrilled to learn that I had been awarded the scholarship.

I had just returned to Canberra after a short break for Christmas and New Year's to continue my ice sample analysis for my Honours project. I must admit, I was feeling a bit worn out at the time, but the news of the scholarship was a refreshing boost of energy. I immediately shared the wonderful news with my family, and they were absolutely delighted and incredibly proud.

I've always been deeply passionate about the Earth's systems and the environment, which led me to pursue a degree in Climate Science and Environmental Science at ANU. During my undergraduate studies, I explored various aspects of the Earth's systems, from earth and marine sciences to climate systems, biodiversity, and environmental management. What fascinated me the most was the ability to understand the current state of the Earth in the context of its past. This passion drove me to choose my honours project in paleoclimatology. My project involves dating and analysing ice samples from a small island in East Antarctica, aiming to build a water isotope record that will help reconstruct past climatic conditions. This is particularly important for remote and harsh areas where satellite data can't capture things accurately, making proxies like these so valuable. Hopefully, I'll be able to go to Antarctica someday as a scientist!

As my Honours project nears its completion and graduation draws closer, I'm excited about the opportunities ahead to continue contributing to both the scientific community and the public through the knowledge and skills I've gained during my time at university, especially as we face the challenges of climate change.

Once again, thank you for your generosity and support. I truly appreciate it and I wish you all the best.

Sincerely
Dine Yoo

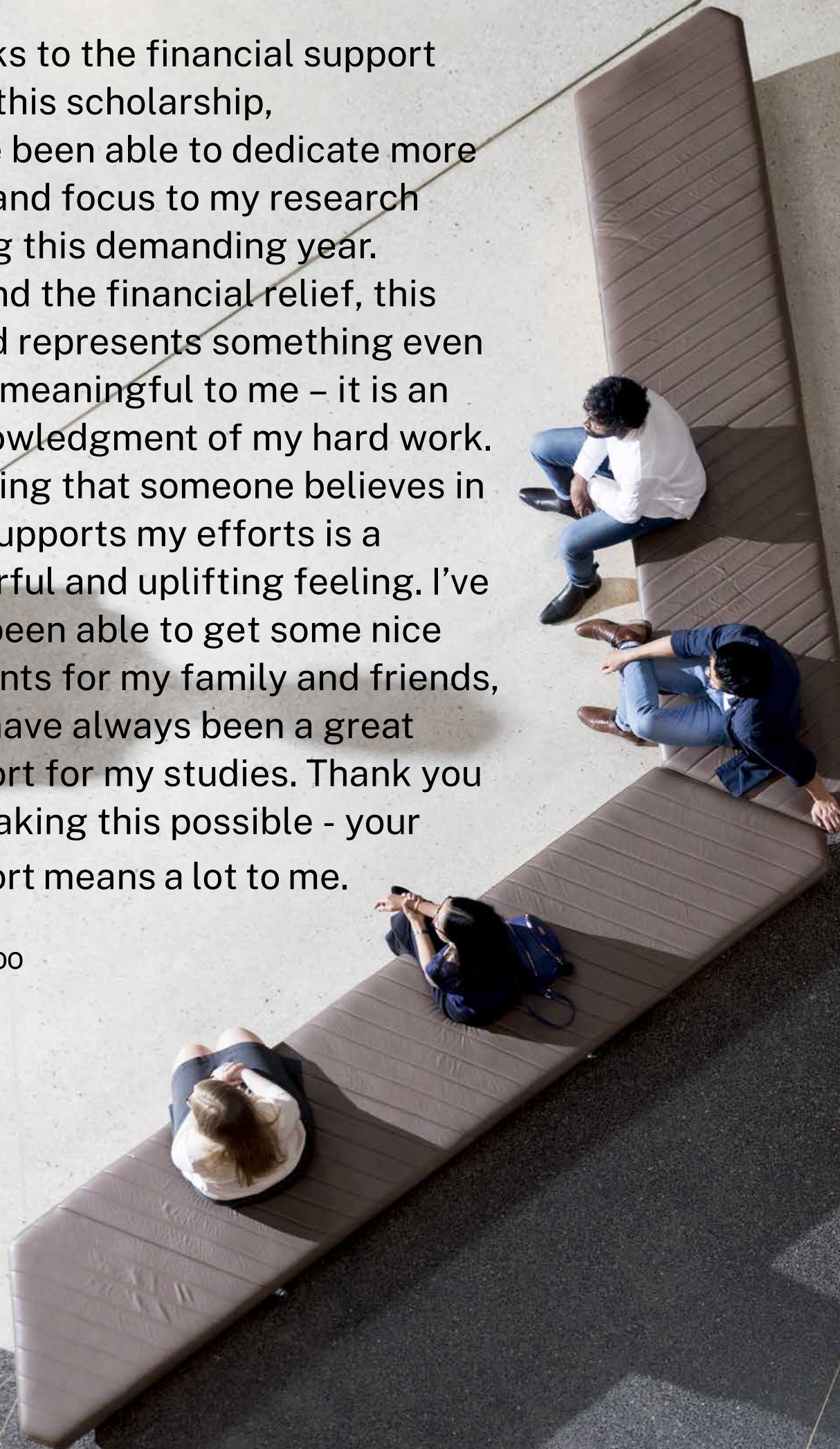


This scholarship has been a strong motivation, encouraging me to keep pushing forward with my studies and research throughout my Honours year. I cannot express enough how much this support has meant to me.

- DINE YOO

Thanks to the financial support from this scholarship, I have been able to dedicate more time and focus to my research during this demanding year. Beyond the financial relief, this award represents something even more meaningful to me – it is an acknowledgment of my hard work. Knowing that someone believes in and supports my efforts is a powerful and uplifting feeling. I've also been able to get some nice presents for my family and friends, who have always been a great support for my studies. Thank you for making this possible - your support means a lot to me.

- DINE YOO





Message of thanks from Chung Hei (Jonas) Lai

2024 recipient of the W B Clarke Prize

My name is Jonas, and I am an international student from Hong Kong. I am truly honoured to have been awarded the W B Clarke Prize in Earth Sciences for 2024. When I first found out, I was filled with gratitude and excitement. I was at university, and my family and close friends were the first people I told. Having already received a first-year academic prize, I did not expect to receive such a prestigious award two years in a row, so this recognition means a great deal to me.

I have always been fascinated by the power of nature and passionate about protecting our environment. This inspired me to pursue a double major in Earth and Climate Science, where I have been fortunate to explore a broad range of knowledge about our natural world. This award has helped me grow not only academically but also practically. I was able to purchase my first rock hammer, which I use in fieldwork! Thanks to this support, I have visited incredible places such as Kosciuszko NP and Wee Jasper for fieldwork, experiencing firsthand Australia's amazing landscapes.

Last year, I joined a geological hazards field trip to Japan. Speaking with locals still affected by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami was deeply moving and strengthened my determination to research geohazards. I want to better understand how we can improve earthquake forecasting by studying plate tectonics and subsurface processes. In addition, I recently joined the State Emergency Service, training to provide critical support to communities in times of need. I look forward to applying my scientific knowledge in real-life situations.

Receiving the W B Clarke Prize is much more than an award to me. It is a recognition of my dedication and motivates me to continue producing innovative academic work. I sincerely thank you for your generosity and support, which not only helps students like me but also encourages future awardees to pursue their dreams with confidence.

With heartfelt thanks and best wishes
Jonas Lai

Message of thanks from Salome Urien

2025 recipient of the A E Ringwood Supplementary Scholarship

Hello, my name is Salome, I am 22, and I moved across the world from France to start my PhD in biogeochemistry here at ANU. I am beyond grateful that I got the opportunity to be awarded the A E Ringwood Supplementary Scholarship. Knowing I have this extra support to get me through my PhD journey is very relieving. I am working on a very important gap in knowledge, which might require me to extend my PhD work past the funding time my research scholarship covers. The scholarship provides me with the security to propose quality work without worrying about finances.

I am researching biomolecules (fatty molecules specifically) left behind some 250 million years ago by very important modern photosynthetic organisms in the oceans (dinoflagellates). We have no idea when they emerged or how they impacted the oxygen levels in surface oceans and the food web. I am investigating what might have caused their evolution and dominance, and how the food web and nutrient cycles depend on their presence in the oceans.

The influence of climate warming on them is also poorly known, so seeing how their abundance in the rock records relates to climatic/extinction events gives us hints as to what will happen to our oceans in the near future.

I am very keen to work in multidisciplinary fields and see the big picture! I am passionate about the origin of life on Earth (or elsewhere), and how every element composing our world interacts with one another, making our planet beautifully complex. I want to pursue a career in astrobiology, hopefully unearthing answers to big questions and bringing them forward to a broad audience.

Thank you for positively impacting my life and science.

Kind regards
Salome Urien



This scholarship is one of the first steps that is bringing me closer to my dreams. Thank you for donating and supporting science; this gives us room to let our curiosity roam free and push forward human knowledge.

- SALOME URIEN



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